

YEAR OF FAITH

October 11, 2012-November 24, 2013

Scripture Study Program—SESSION 6 of 6

(reflections on the 4 Constitutions of Vatican II included in sessions 2-6)

The Year of Faith: A Bible Study Guide for Catholics by Fr. Mitch Pacwa, S.J., Our Sunday Visitor, Inc., Huntington IN: 2012, \$9.95, 95 pp., ISBN 978-1-61278-623-0

SESSION SIX: “FAITH AND THE NEW EVANGELIZATION” (pp. 85-94)

Having read everything up to page 94, let us begin with a prayer:

An Act of Faith

O my God, I firmly believe that you are one God in three divine Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; I believe that your divine Son became flesh and died for our sins, and that he shall come to judge the living and the dead. I believe these and all the truths that the Holy Catholic Church teaches, because you have revealed them, who can neither deceive nor be deceived. Amen.

“Intent on gathering the signs of the times in the present of history, faith commits every one of us to become a living sign of the presence of the Risen Lord in the world”—*Port Fidei*, n. 15 (see page 85)

“Recent popes have emphasized the need to revitalize our faith in God and share it with others in our de-Christianized culture through a ‘New Evangelization’” (p. 85).

How best do we do such revitalization? such sharing? such evangelizing?

“New Evangelization means calling everyone to have faith in God as he is revealed by Jesus Christ. It is a re-commitment to a personal love of Christ in union with the Church. It is a discovery of life and grace in the sacraments and a recovery of receiving the Bible as the word of God” (p. 86).

How would you envision best implementing the New Evangelization in our parish?

The roots of people’s loss of faith in God and Church are identified on pp. 87-88: Rationalism/Politics/Materialism/Doubts/Neo-Gnosticism/Skepticism/Immorality/Loss.

How have you experienced any of these in yourself or others? Possible response?

Share responses to the 2 *Investigate* questions on p. 91 re Fruits of the Holy Spirit.

Discuss the 3 questions at the bottom of page 93.

Apply the Practice suggested on p. 94 for this week to be a “New Evangelizer.”

From Pope Francis’ 3/17/13 Mass in Vatican City’s St. Anna Church

The Pope explained that sometimes people say to priests: “Oh, Father, if you knew my life you wouldn’t say that.’ ‘Why? What have you done?’ ‘Oh, I’ve done bad things.’ ‘Good! Go to Jesus; He likes you to tell him these things. He forgets. He has the special ability to forget. He forgets them, kisses you, embraces you, and tells you only: “Neither do I condemn you. Go and sin no more.” He only gives you this counsel. A month later we are the same ... We return to the Lord. The Lord never tires of forgiving us, never! We are the ones who get tired of asking forgiveness. Let us ask for the grace to never tire of asking forgiveness, because He never tires of forgiving us. Let us ask for this grace.”

Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World of the 2nd Vatican Council
(*Gaudium et Spes*—from the opening line: “The joys and the hopes....”—12/7/65)
http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_cons_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html

PART II—Some Problems of Special Urgency

Chapter 1 of Part II is on “Fostering the Nobility of Marriage and the Family.” Here we read that “children contribute in their own way to making their parents holy” (article 48).

In what ways have you witnessed or experienced this in your own life?

Chapter 2 of Part II is on “The Proper Development of Culture.” Here we find:

--“the human spirit must be cultivated in such a way that there results a growth in its ability to wonder, to understand, to contemplate, to make personal judgments, and to develop a religious, moral, and social sense” (article 59);

--“In pastoral care, appropriate use must be made not only of theological principles, but also of the findings of the secular sciences, especially of psychology and sociology. Thus the faithful can be brought to live the faith in a more thorough and mature way” (art. 62);

--“May the faithful....blend modern science and its theories and the understanding of the most recent discoveries with Christian morality and doctrine. Thus their religious practice and morality can keep pace with their scientific knowledge and with an ever-advancing technology”....“Theological inquiry should seek a profound understanding of revealed truth without neglecting close contact with its own times”....and “let it be recognized that all the faithful, clerical and lay, possess a lawful freedom of inquiry and of thought, and the freedom to express their minds humbly and courageously about those matters in which they enjoy competence” (article 62).

How have we done as a Church regarding the above? What areas need attention?

Chapter 3 of Part II is on “Socio-Economic Life.” Here we read: “when workers come from another country or district and contribute by their labor to the economic advancement of a nation or region, all discrimination with respect to wages and working conditions must be carefully avoided” (article 67).

How would our national immigration policies measure up regarding the above?

Chapter 4 of Part II is on “The Life of the Political Community.” Here we find:

--“Christians should recognize that various legitimate though conflicting views can be held concerning the regulation of temporal affairs” (article 75); and

--it is the task of the Church “to uncover, cherish, and ennoble all that is true, good, and beautiful in the human community” (article 76).

Looking at our parish, how do we implement these guidelines here at home?

Chapter 5 of Part II is on “The Fostering of Peace and the Promotion of a Community of Nations.” Here we read:

--“Each branch of the human family possesses in itself and in its worthier traditions some part of the spiritual treasure entrusted by God to humanity” (article 86); and

--“Now since the judgment of the parents supposes a rightly formed conscience, it is highly important that every one be given the opportunity to practice upright and truly human responsibility” (article 87).

How do our interfaith initiatives and our very selves tend to these principles?

CONCLUSION

“let there be unity in what is necessary, freedom in what is unsettled, and charity in any case” (art. 92)